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ABSTRACT

This report describes the organization, planning, and procedures for two seminars which examined alternative approaches to the achievement of two goals: increasing equity and improving educational practices. The seminars had as their major purposes the study and analysis of interorganizational collaboration as it enhances these goals, and the development of an experiential knowledge base that regional program staff could use as a basis for developing a rationale, goals, design, and criteria for the regional grants program. The first of the two seminars focused on geographical and program or product perspectives to study the phenomenon, whereas the second stressed related issues and special interest areas. In both instances, however, the improvement of practice and the increase of equity were viewed as ends, while the conceptual issues of collaboration and working through intermediaries were treated as means. Outcomes of the seminars had in common the identification of significant characteristics, issues, and dimensions relating to the conceptual issues, the analysis and exploration of these issues, the derivation of implications resulting from these issues, and the development of a data source for the conceptualization of a grants program. Complete lists of the recommendations and guidelines produced by each seminar appear in the last two sections of the report. (Author/RAA)

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Interorganizational Arrangements for Collaborative Efforts

SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS

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National Institute of Education

February 29, 1980

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FOREWORD

The materials in this document are part of a larger collection of reports prepared by the Dissemination Program of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. They were produced as a result of a contract awarded by the Regional Program (RP) of the National Institute of Education (NIE), Program for the Dissemination and Improvement of Practice. The Regional Program stimulates and supports mechanisms for improving educational practice and equity through regional approaches. It emphasizes interagency collaboration among decision makers in regions, states, local school districts, regional laboratories, R&D centers, colleges and universities and other educational organizations.

The Regional Program has developed a plan that calls for a set of activities designed to focus organizational resources and capacities on NIE's two goals of improving practice and increasing equity in schools. A major component of the plan is a program that will fund a variety of organizations working in collaboration to undertake promising approaches to practice improvement. The activities carried out by NWREL were designed to provide information and thinking that would be used by Regional Program staff in designing this funding program.

Under the NWREL contract, two seminars were held where RP staff and selected practitioners together explored the issues related to organizational collaboration for practice improvement. This resulted in the volume titled Seminar Proceedings.

Work was also done to provide a basis from research and from other literature for further consideration of Regional Program issues. This resulted in two volumes titled Commissioned Papers and Literature Review.

The contract also resulted in a compilation of information about existing interorganizational arrangements for improving educational practice. This resulted in the volume titled Project Studies. The fifth volume attempts to derive and pull together implications and conclusions from all of these activities and is titled Final Report.

Each of the activities conducted by NWREL was designed to explore four issues that the Regional Program believed were key to planning the new program. These issues were expressed as a series of questions related to the outcomes of improvement of practice and increased equity, through the strategy of supporting alternative forms of interorganizational collaboration and to the mechanism of working through intermediaries. Although these and other relevant questions have not been answered fully, a major step has been taken through this "collaborative efforts" project. This document is made available to you for your own use and to help the Regional Program further understand and clarify issues related to these general topics. We would appreciate your reactions to this document and to the others in this series. Your comments will assist us as we continue to develop and improve the Regional Program. Thank you for your help.

David P. Mack, Regional Program
Team Leader for Development

W. E. Ellis, Assistant Director for
Regional Program

OVERVIEW

The National Institute of Education (NIE) has long recognized that valuable ideas can be obtained, not only from formal research, but also from the process of individuals sharing, in a "think tank" environment, their experiences from real world events.

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), in cooperation with Regional Program staff, designed and conducted two one-and-a-half day seminars aimed at idea comparisons, policy considerations and an examination of alternative approaches to achieve the goals of increasing equity and improving educational practice. These diversified groups were representatives from: practitioners to academic theorists; NIE's target groups of teachers, administrators, chief state school officers and school boards; minority and underserved populations; and advocacy organizations.

The seminars had as their major purposes:

1. The discussion and analysis of interorganizational collaboration as it enhances the potential for improving educational practice and increasing equity.
2. The development of an experiential knowledge base that Regional Program staff would use as a basis for developing a rationale, goals, design and criteria for the regional grants program.

The first of two seminars focused on geographical and program or product perspectives to study the phenomenon, whereas the second stressed issues-related and special interest areas. In both instances, however, the improvement of practice and the increase of equity were viewed as ends, while the conceptual issues of collaboration and working through intermediaries were treated as means.

Common to both seminars were the following outcomes:

1. The identification of significant characteristics, issues and dimensions relating to the conceptual issues (i.e., collaboration, intermediaries, improvement of practice and increased equity) and the four interorganizational categories (i.e., geographical, programs/products, issues-related and special target populations)
2. The exploration and analysis of these issues
3. The derivation of implications resulting from these issues
4. The development of a data source for the conceptualization of a grants program for Regional Program (NIE)

The recommendations and guidelines developed as end products of the first seminar grew out of analyses of five cluster areas of concerns. These five areas, which also served as organizers, are:

- Success Models (Collaboratives)
- Incentives and Constraints (Issues and Concerns)
- Types of Collaboratives
- Intermediaries (Roles and Functions)
- Impact or Effectiveness

Five cluster areas identified during the second seminar are:

- Definition of Collaboration
- Functions of Collaboratives
- Functional Characteristics of Collaboratives
- Directional Statements
- Some Guidelines (written in "The Grants Program Should..." statements)

Further recommendations were developed at the second seminar concerning the issues of increasing equity and improving practice.

Complete lists of all recommendations and guidelines appear in the last two sections of this report.

What cannot be captured in simple seminar reporting is the rich information exchange which resulted in the recommendations. The candor, humor and free flow of ideas has greatly enhanced the success of the total project.

Virginia L. Thompson, Director
Dissemination Program
Northwest Regional Educational
Laboratory

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Of the many individuals who have participated in these seminars, special recognition is due to three groups of people.

First, there are a countless number of individuals who nominated groups and individuals for inclusion in this important activity. Because of the nature of the project, it was critical to have representation from a broad spectrum of perspectives, interests and orientations. Compressed timelines, budget constraints and already full schedules necessitated a laborious selection process. The assistance provided by others outside the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory greatly aided the selection of seminar participants.

Second, the seminar participants themselves deserve special recognition. The time, creative energy and willingness to make maximum use of limited time enabled us to gain an incredible amount of information in a very compressed time frame.

It is no easy task to pull together a divergent group of people and involve them productively. The high level of professional expertise, interpersonal skills and commitment to the goals of improving practice and increasing equity are borne out in the recommendations from these seminars.

Third, many staff members of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory have contributed significantly to the preparation for and conduct of these seminars. In addition to staff members within the Dissemination Program who designed, coordinated and conducted the seminars, people in other support units of the Laboratory assisted in the many tasks involved in this activity.

The immeasurable contributions of all of these individuals is gratefully acknowledged.

Seminar Purposes and Outcomes

The National Institute of Education, in the Request for Proposal for this Collaborative Efforts Project, proposed planning and conducting a series of seminars to:

1. Discuss and analyze the phenomenon of interorganizational collaboration as it enhances and contributes to the improvement of educational practice and increasing equity.
2. The development of an experiential knowledge base that Regional Program staff would use as a basis for developing a rationale, goals, design and criteria for the regional grants program.

The seminars, designed as "think tank" sessions, were to utilize a highly interactive model which emphasized laboratory learning activities that were task centered. Each seminar focused around three stages: defining, analyzing and deriving implications.

The purposes of the seminars were to focus on: the improvement of practice and the increase of equity as ends, while the conceptual issues of collaboration and working through intermediaries were viewed as means.

Common to both seminars were the following intended outcomes:

1. The identification of significant characteristics, issues and dimensions relating to the conceptual issues (i.e., collaboration, intermediaries, improvement of practice and increased equity) and the four interorganizational categories (i.e., geographical, programs/products, issues-related and special target populations)
2. The exploration and analysis of these issues
3. The derivation of implications resulting from these issues

4. The development of a data source for the conceptualization of a grants program for Regional Program of NIE.

The seminar plan had, as part of its stated objective, further exploration and clarification of several overarching questions:

1. How can the use of collaboratives overcome weaknesses associated with other improvement of practice mechanisms?
2. What kinds of school improvement objectives are best attacked by what kinds of intermediary organization?
3. Are specific kinds of collaborative partnerships essential to enhance educational equity?
4. As NIE implements support for various kinds of collaboratives, will it be possible to refine our knowledge about collaboration for school improvement and increased equity?
5. What criteria can be used to determine the comparative benefits of various alternatives in effectively reaching target populations?

The first of two seminars focused on geographical and program or product perspectives to study the phenomenon, whereas the second stressed issues-related and special interest areas. In both instances, however, the improvement of practice and the increase of equity were viewed as ends, while the conceptual issues of collaboration and working through intermediaries were treated as means.

The recommendations and guidelines developed as end products of the first seminar grew out of analyses of five cluster areas of concerns. These five areas, which also served as organizers, are:

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Complete lists of all recommendations and guidelines appear in the last two sections of this report.

Project Staff and Seminar Participants

Participants in the seminars included three different groups, each with specifically ascribed roles.

Roles assumed by the Interorganizational Collaboration Project staff of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory were:

- Seminar Facilitator (Joseph Pascarelli)

- Seminar Analyzer and Documenter (Louis Rubin)
- Overall Project Coordinator and Integrator (Virginia Thompson)

The seminar facilitator's role was concerned with the process of the seminars--designing and maintaining the design, adhering to timelines and task orientation and insuring the development of final recommendations and guidelines to influence the development of the grants program.

The role of the project analyzer and documenter was one of conceptual analysis and documentation. His chief functions were to maintain the conceptual reference provided by the input papers and materials (i.e., Pre-Seminar Workbook), to track and to record key points raised by seminar participants and Regional Program staff.

Finally, the project coordinator attended and observed both seminars to insure integration and coordination of findings with other project components (literature reviews, operational project studies and commissioned papers).

Staff members from the Regional Program of the National Institute of Education were active participants for the purposes of clarifying and exploring issues and concerns related to interorganizational efforts in collaboration. It should be pointed out that the seminars, in a sense, were designed to gain input <u>for them to use</u> in Regional Program planning, specifically for the development of their grants program (Appendix A).

The seminar facilitator and project officer conducted a briefing session for the eleven Regional Program personnel two weeks prior to the seminars. The purposes of the session were to clarify expectations concerning participation and outcomes, to clarify ascribed roles, to review the seminar design, and to obtain a critique from the group.

This session proved to be most helpful. Sound recommendations were

made; roles and functions for the seminars were clarified. Four additional representatives from the Program for Dissemination and Improvement of Practice attended and actively engaged in the seminar discussions (Appendix A).

Invited participants to the seminars assumed pivotal roles since their opinions, views and perspectives on interorganizational collaboration were being sought. They were asked, formally, to share their views based upon their personal, experiential knowledge bases and their reading of the pre-seminar reading materials. They also were encouraged to engage in interaction with other participants by clarifying, questioning, probing, responding, suggesting and proposing so that the diversity of research and field perspectives was tapped for its richness and, ultimately, analyzed for its implications (Appendix B).

Selection Process for Identifying Participants

Twenty-one individuals, representing a diversity of viewpoints, were selected to participate, primarily as generators of data and opinions on the issues related to interorganizational collaboration for the purposes of school improvement and increased educational equity.

Nomination and final selection of seminar participants was completed by NWREL staff with agreements from NIE and were based on two sets of criteria.

The first set was related to their overall potential for successful participation and contribution to the seminars' purposes:

- Expertise in dissemination theory and practice
- Familiarity with the state-of-the-art (or practice)
- Interest in interagency collaboration strategies
- Experiences in interagency collaboration
- Knowledge of educational equity concepts and needs
- Representation of a specific vested interest group

The second set of criteria was used to assure a diversity of viewpoints and representation in the areas of:

- Geographically defined regions (e.g., Northeast U.S.)
- Implementation of an R&D program or product
- Implementation of a successfully documented educational program or product
- Common interest groups involved in issue-related efforts to improve school practice
- Special population groups defined by such characteristics as economic conditions, social class, culture or ethnicity, rural or urban setting, special learning needs, etc.
- Institutional affiliations (e.g., higher education, local district, advocacy agencies, state department, social service agencies, etc.)
- Role types in the school improvement process (e.g., administrator in a state department of education, local buildings, principal, etc.)

The process of identification and selection of these participants involved six steps:

1. Solicitation of nominees. Informational telephone calls were made to professionals in the National Institute of Education; educational laboratories; state, intermediate and local education agencies; higher education institutions; and social service

agencies. These individuals were asked to suggest potential participants whom they felt would contribute to the goals of the seminars. (This process included peer nomination.)

2. Cross check of nominees. Telephone inquiries were made to substantiate potential contributions of each nominee with another individual apt to be knowledgeable about him or her.
3. Identification of participants. The two sets of criteria identified above were then used to screen the list of nominees and to identify from the list two most appropriate groups to be invited to the seminars. A smaller group of alternates also was identified.
4. Invitation to participate. Each invitee was contacted by the seminar facilitator and briefed on the seminar purpose, outcomes, role expectations, etc. and invited to attend.
5. Confirmation of acceptance. Some invitees accepted immediately, others requested time to check calendars and to consider the obligations involved and two declined due to scheduling conflicts. Alternates were contacted in the last instance.
6. Followup. A formal letter of invitation and the Pre-Seminar Workbook were distributed to the twenty-one participants to provide a contextual base and to create a state of readiness for the seminar interaction. (See section on Pre-Seminar Materials.)
7. Second Followup. Each participant was contacted a third time during the week preceding the seminars and were given opportunities to question and discuss relevant needs/concerns.
8. Pre-Seminar. So that participants had opportunities to meet

and speak with each other, as well as with project staff, prior to the formal seminar worksessions, informal gatherings were held on the evenings before each seminar.

Pre-Seminar Materials

A Letter of Seminar Specifics (Appendix B) and a Pre-Seminar Workbook were prepared and distributed to all seminar participants two weeks prior to the events.

The intent of the letter was to make participants knowledgeable about the broader NIE context of which the Grants Program and, more specifically the seminars, were parts. The information included:

- The functions of the Dissemination and Improvement of Practice (DIP) unit of NIE
- The functions and goals of Regional Program, a unit within DIP
- An explanation of RP's Grants Program and the purposes of the Project (i.e., Interorganizational Arrangements for Collaborative Efforts)
- The purposes and outcomes of the seminars
- Registration details.

The Workbook represented a common knowledge base especially identified, gathered and synthesized for the seminars.

Serving as a stimulus and reference tool both prior to and during the seminars, the Workbook included the following:

- List of seminar participants and agencies represented

- An excerpt from the Technical Proposal (Interorganizational Arrangements for Collaborative Efforts), submitted to the National Institute of Education by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (Abstract, pp. 1-17)
- Preliminary seminar designs, including a sample specification
- A focused review of the literature on interorganizational collaboration
- Precis and a synthesis of ten studies dealing with collaborative organizational arrangements
- An interview format developed and used by project staff in gathering descriptive data from 24 functioning collaboratives
- Responses from 15 of the 24 collaboratives interviewed with descriptive information about each collaborative's impetus, purpose, developmental pattern, organizational interactions, operational strategies, organizational arrangements and conditions for success
- A list of commissioned papers and writers (Appendix C)
- Abstracts from those commissioned papers available, including themes, key points and recommendations
- Tracking Worksheets for use by participants during the seminars

As a preparatory activity, participants were asked to read carefully the letter of invitation (December 1979) and the materials in the Workbook. They were encouraged to reflect on their own experiences with respect to the collaborative process, their work in intermediary agencies and the extent to which these influence both improved educational practice and increased equity. Finally, they were asked to prepare 15-20 minute presentations consisting of their own perspectives/positions on the issue of interorganizational arrangements for collaborative efforts.

The Conceptualized Seminar Model

The design developed for both seminar sessions was a highly interactive model emphasizing laboratory learning activities that were task centered. It consisted of three developmental stages: defining, analyzing and deriving implications.

The defining stage included presentations by invited participants. Drawing upon their personal experiences, their knowledge bases and the pre-seminar information (i.e., focused reviews, project interviews and commissioned papers), participants engaged in provocative interactions. They were encouraged to begin tracking the relevant issues, concerns, etc., by using a Worksheet (Appendix D).

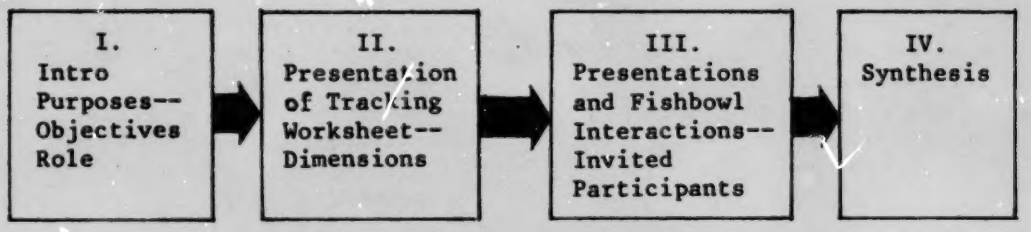
Invited participants explored further in a fishbowl interaction of searching, probing and evoking as the Regional Program staff observed. The Regional Program staff exchanged places with the invited participants to identify specific concerns and to raise relevant questions. The facilitator synthesized and recorded this information publicly. As the analyzing stage began, invited participants responded to questions and elaborated on the concerns. All participants (invited members and RP staff) then formed small groups and reviewed the Tracking Worksheets, analyzing each dimension for appropriateness, new insights, problem issues, relevancy, interrelationships, certainties, uncertainties, obstacles, etc. This information was shared and recorded.

Participants identified cluster areas of concern and began to derive implications. An examination of the broader level enabled the

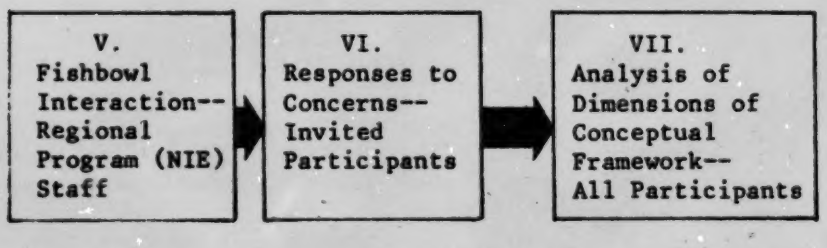
groups to translate these implications into recommendations and guidelines to serve as a data source for the planning and development of a grants program.

Each of the two seminar designs can be described as follows:

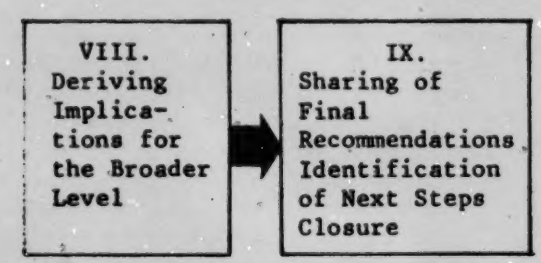
DEFINING STAGE (Fig. 1)



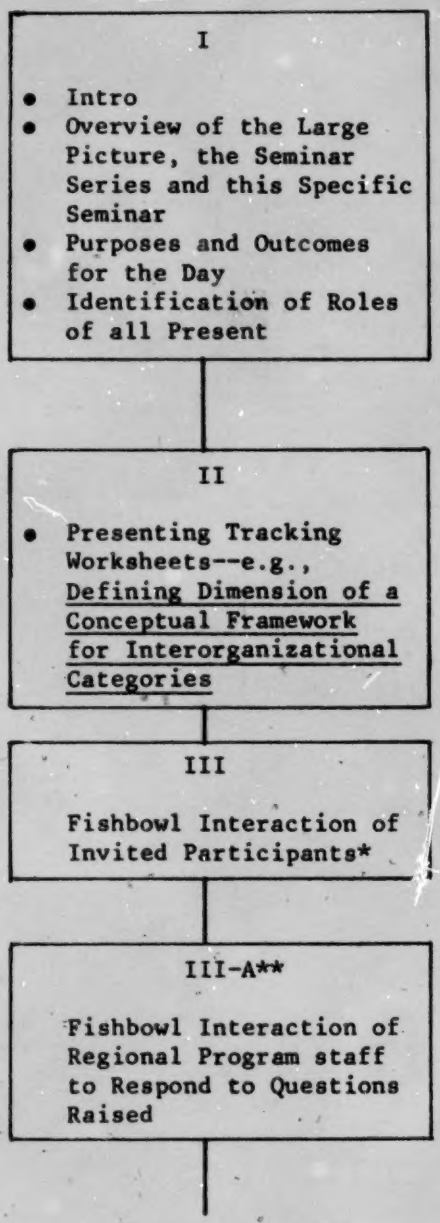
ANALYZING STAGE



DERIVING IMPLICATIONS STAGE



Seminar Procedures


I
• Intro
• Overview of the Large Picture, the Seminar Series and this Specific Seminar
• Purposes and Outcomes for the Day
• Identification of Roles of all Present
II
• Presenting Tracking Worksheets--e.g., Defining Dimension of a Conceptual Framework for Interorganizational Categories
III
Fishbowl Interaction of Invited Participants*
III-A**
Fishbowl Interaction of Regional Program staff to Respond to Questions Raised

Description

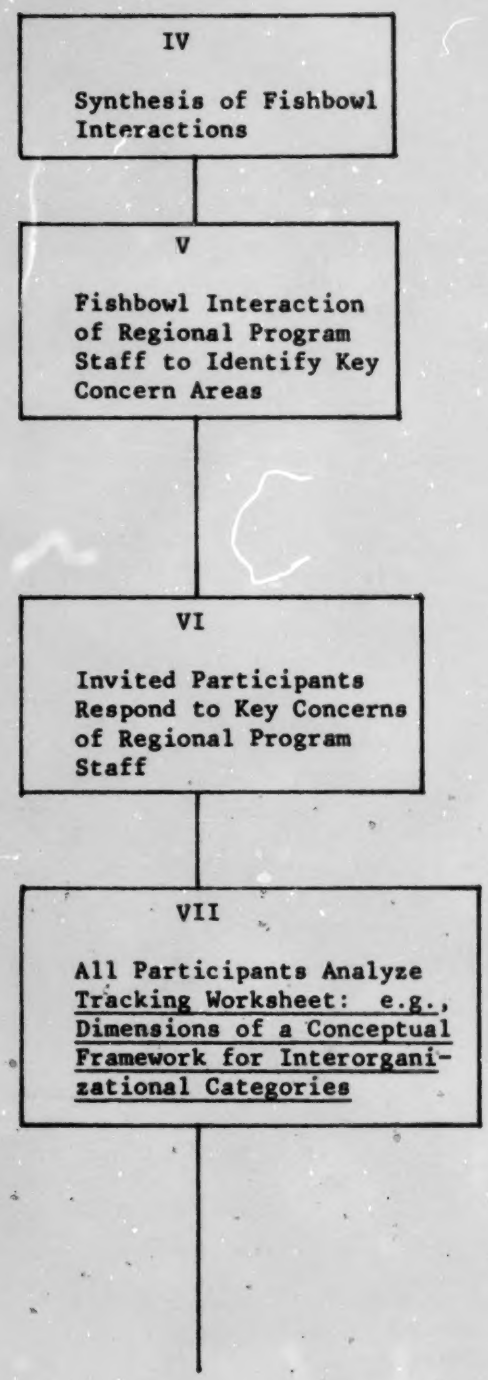
- Facilitator opens session
- Regional Program director or representatives recap the large picture
- Facilitator presents seminar series' context, purposes and outcomes
- Interactive roles of invited participants, Regional Program staff and facilitator are clarified

- Facilitator distributes and explains dimensions of Worksheets to the group. All are asked to maintain them throughout the seminar, recording salient points, additional concerns, questions, etc.

- Each invited participant makes a presentation identifying key issues and concerns about the interorganizational collaborative process. Questions are generated; relationships are made--searching, probing, evoking occur. What is the collaborative phenomenon that occurs in a geographically defined region? Are patterns emerging across the conceptual issues? Regional Program staff listens in outer circle. During this activity, the facilitator listens and prepares a synthesis.

*III - During Seminar I, small group sessions replaced the fishbowl interactions during which invited participants shared views with Regional Program staff.

**III-A- As a result of questions and issues raised in Module III, the Regional Program staff requested the opportunity to react and respond to issues raised using a fishbowl format. The facilitator acknowledged the request and a 20-minute response period followed.


IV
Synthesis of Fishbowl Interactions
V
Fishbowl Interaction of Regional Program Staff to Identify Key Concern Areas
VI
Invited Participants Respond to Key Concerns of Regional Program Staff
VII
All Participants Analyze Tracking Worksheet: e.g., Dimensions of a Conceptual Framework for Interorganizational Categories

- Consultant reports highlights and synthesizes.

- Regional Program staff engage in an interaction during which they identify key concerns, issues and questions stimulated by Modules III and IV. Facilitator leads group and records publicly. Invited participants listen in outer circle.

- Participants use concerns identified in Module V as a springboard to give additional input. This is followed by a question and answer period.

- Regional Program staff and invited participants work in small groups to revise their Tracking Worksheets and clarify and analyze by using such guidelines as: What are the forces acting upon the dimensions? How relevant is the dimension? What problems exist? How do they interrelate in terms of the conceptual issues of collaboration, intermediaries, equity and improvement of practice? What certainties, uncertainties, obstacles, support, etc., exist? Small group concerns and issues* are identified. (They appear as raw data in Appendices E and G.)

*These were later analyzed and, although not a part of, became a developmental basis for, the final recommendations of both seminars.

VIII.

Deriving Implications from the Analysis

- Facilitator leads the large group in a review of the activity flow and the kinds of information shared and generated.

- All participants are then asked to identify implications as they examine the broader issue of relating the conceptual issues of collaboration, intermediaries, improvement of practice and equity to this specific interorganizational category. What new substantive issues arise? Are definitions expanded? Is a new or modified classification schema suggested? During the development of implications, individual critiquing occurs of small group data. Critiquing questions/comments* appear as raw data in Appendices F and H.

- A product (i.e., a series of recommendations and guidelines) is developed and synthesized by each small group. Report-outs are made to Regional Program administration and staff. (Final Recommendations, Seminars I and II)

IX.**

- Sharing of Next Steps
- Evaluation (Process)
- Closure

- Regional Program administration acknowledges receiving the Final Recommendations and share how the information will be integrated into the grants program efforts, as well as broader programmatic efforts of Regional Program.

- Closure by seminar facilitator.

*Although not part of the final recommendations, these critiques proved helpful to small groups as they developed the outcome data.

**In the case of Seminar II, participants and Regional Program staff were invited to define further the following terms for Regional Program: equity, the improvement of practice, intermediaries and collaboration.

Final Recommendations and Guidelines: Seminar I

Discussion during the first seminar focused on issues around the use of collaboratives and intermediaries. Recommendations of the participants can be grouped into five general areas:

1. Successful Collaborative Models
2. Incentives and Constraints to Collaborative Efforts
3. Types of Collaboratives
4. Intermediaries - Roles and Functions
5. Impact - Effectiveness

Area I - Success Models (Collaboratives)

Recommendations:

1. Carefully define the purposes for use of collaboratives.
   a. Conduct research on the collaborative process.
   b. Solve specific problems through collaborative processes involving intermediaries.
   c. "Push" the collaborative process nationwide (more than was done with earlier projects like Research and Development Utilization).
   d. State that the dilemmas to be solved are the improvement of practice and increase of equity.
   e. Include in the grants announcement both a concrete statement of the problem and the nature of collaboration specified.
   f. Identify why the collaborative concept is essential.
2. Build collaborative skills at management and policymaking levels
3. Build capacity for collaboration at all levels.

Area II - Incentives - Constraints (Issues and Concerns)

Recommendations:

1. To capitalize on one of the most powerful incentives (self-interest of operating agency), NIE should encourage problem solving in the context of the two dilemmas of improving practice and equity through collaboratives. This allows those who are closest to the dilemma to define the problem. Those closer agencies know their own capabilities and also what kinds of collaboration are possible.
2. NIE needs to adopt ways of consistently monitoring the degree to which collaboration is in fact solving identified problems and increasing equity.
3. In addition to the desirability of having effective collaboration, attend to the importance and criticality of the problem itself, which for instance, could be the improvement of instruction.

Area III - Types of Collaboratives

Recommendations:

1. Develop a clear statement of purpose of the thrust of programs eligible for funding (e.g., regional programs are concerned with programs that purport to utilize collaborative efforts to build knowledge about and demonstrate the nature and process of collaboratives).
2. Develop a clear statement to address the issues of control parity in the functioning of collaboratives.
3. Delineate collaboratives by major functions (i.e., information exchange, teacher assistance, professional development).
4. Address key question--are there stages in the "life" of a collaborative that need to be studied? If so, should one of the concerns of RP be to assist collaboratives in moving from one stage to another?

5. Consider alternatives for funding noneducational institutions operating for the purpose of improved educational programs.

Area IV - Intermediaries (Roles and Functions)

Recommendations:

1. If NIE supports collaborative efforts, it has an obligation to provide cross-project support services (technical assistance) to those it funds.
2. NIE should encourage the service providers it now funds (laboratories' State Capacity Building Projects) to provide support services (technical assistance) to collaborative efforts, whether or not funded by NIE.
3. NIE should provide assistance to plan new collaboratives (e.g., Arkansas study of regional cooperative).
4. NIE should do research on what constitutes an effective intermediary regarding collaborative efforts.
5. NIE should attempt to work through intermediaries that are as close to the client as possible.

Questions:

What types of support and technical assistance are needed?

At what points is intervention for such support most effective?

Area V - Impact (Effectiveness)

Recommendations:

1. Weighting scores in favor of groups that deal with issues will not guarantee their ability to write proposals (these groups need skills in responding to proposals).
2. Suggest measures by which equity is achieved. There is a need for flexibility because of differing needs of differing groups.

3. Include equity groups in collaborative efforts and policymaking activities.
4. Demonstrate sound knowledge of group being denied equity and institutions serving them, including the existing constraints.
5. Those responding to RFPs must identify the equity needs they plan to impact.
6. Proof (salience) of need should be provided.
7. Fund a variety of projects that will increase equity and improve practice. Do not fund ones in a singular category.
8. NIE could identify areas which are of major concern to them.

Questions:

Who will select target audiences or groups?

What are criteria whereby "increased equity" is measured?

Final Recommendations and Guidelines: Seminar II

Participants of Seminar II focused their discussion concerns around the issues of increasing equity and improving practice through the use of collaboratives and intermediaries. Their discussions dealt directly with the needs of underserved population groups. Their final recommendations fall into five areas:

1. Definitions of Collaboration

2. Functions of Collaboratives

3. Functional Characteristics of Collaboratives

4. Directional Statements

5. Some Guidelines - "The Regional Grants Program Should..."

In addition, the participants made some very direct recommendations concerning equity and the improvement of practice.

Area I - Definition of Collaboration

Guidelines for Developing Proposals.

1. Eligibility

   a. All groups in the collaborative must be participating and contributing members.

   b. They must focus on a specific problem within an identified dilemma.

   c. They must produce measurable, observable outcomes.

   d. Outcomes must be related to improvement of practice and/or equity.

   e. Target groups must be included in the collaborative. (For purposes of this RFP, target groups are to be those identified by DIP: teachers, principals, superintendents and school boards).

2. Criteria

   a. Musts:

      1) Volunteer to be assigned

      2) Include dissemination of information on use of existing knowledge to improve practice or enhance equity

      3) Demonstrated ability to assemble and use existing knowledge base in the area of the problem (at least one member group in the collaborative must have that capability)

      4) Evidence of meetings or interactions of collaborative

      5) Include new thrust of existing collaborative or a new thrust of a new collaborative--must show evidence of IMPACT

   b. Desired:

      Participation of a teacher training institution and the inclusion of advocacy groups.

Area II - Functions of Collaboratives

Recommendations:

1. Provision and sharing of information to members and to groups beyond the collaborative
   a. Synthesizing and adapting information to target groups with implications for improvement of practice and equity
2. Development of activities and products based on sound rationale, taking into consideration the political sensitivities
3. Monitoring and assessment of the effectiveness of the application of the information
   a. Redefining the existing knowledge base on the basis of assessments
   b. Assuming an active role in the communication processes

Area III - Functional Characteristics of Collaboratives

Views on what collaboration can accomplish:

1. Information base: collection, provision, sharing, adaptation, interpretation within and beyond collaboratives
2. Developmental activities: programmatic activities, products based on sound rationales and taking into consideration political sensitivities and special needs of the target groups
3. Coordination
4. Monitor and assess--Is it working and how?
5. Documentation--Redefine--Is it working and how?
6. Communicate/disseminate information about the collaborative effort.
7. Increase professional involvement/participation of minorities, non-represented groups

Area IV - Directional Statements

Recommendations:

1. NIE must be aware of and account for the political context within which collaboratives operate.
2. NIE should require that proposals be developed by those individuals (teachers as well as administrators) who will be involved in the project.
3. Proposals must evidence awareness of related research and models that emanate from previous development.
4. NIE should identify sources of information about how to build successful cooperatives and where to go for help.
5. NIE should identify different strategies required for working with formal and informal collaboratives.
6. The RFP should allow sufficient flexibility for collaboratives to meet the needs important to them.
7. NIE should publicize the Grants Program so that nontraditional (isolated) groups will learn about it.
8. NIE should be sensitive to the time required to develop a proposal and allow sufficient time for that development.
9. NIE should avoid terminology that is confusing to different groups.
10. NIE should write the grants announcement in clear, understandable language.

Area V - Some Guidelines - "The Grants Program Should..."

1. Actively advertise with minority agencies and institutions for purposes of:
   a. Addressing problems of professional isolation
   b. Assuring that the individuals and groups now isolated are included in other collaborations
2. Maintain a problem focus in its funding (at times groups may be asked

to identify their own problems; at time NIE should specify the problem and look for collaboratives to solve it).

3. Consider benefits of two levels of funding:

   a. Many small grants designed to pick up the excess costs of shared decision making

   b. Larger projects designed to demonstrate and test various forms of collaboration

4. Fund projects that address the issue of increased equity as a high priority--equity both as it relates to immediate improvement of instruction, but also as it impacts the organizations' structure to facilitate broader range improvement of instruction.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING EQUITY
AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF PRACTICE

Area - Equity

1. Evidence of specific involvement and parity of representation in all defined activities to include:

   - governance
   - project staff
   - advisory groups
   - consultative services

   Specifically:

   - allocation of resources (by NIE)
   - design of grants announcement proposal review
   - design of program (grantee/applicant)
   - evaluation of project impact
   - implementation/program operation/monitoring/information sharing

   A determining factor:

   Response/reaction of client/target population to provide service or activity

2. Rather than defining special groups, there is a need to address the problem.

   a. The funding criteria should be weighted in favor of the quality of the problem proposed to achieve equity and some reasonable probability of the group to address and succeed in solving the problem.

   b. No less than 50 per cent of the funds should be targeted toward projects proposed to improve equity.

   c. When the decisions are made about the Grants Program, including the decisions about special groups and equity, the recommendations of the two seminar groups should be given the highest priority.

Area - The Improvement of Practice

1. Increasing feelings of "power," "control" over their professional level of:

   - teachers
   - administrators
   - parents

   People are able to "do better" through their desire to fulfill requirements of jobs.

2. Guidance to expectations:

   a. Explicate: knowledge base on which practice is done; ways in which able to serve needs of clientele.

   b. Efficiency

   c. Collaborator can explain how they intend to improve practice. Specific impact on practice. How are children benefitted? Can helping agencies, labs, boards plan toward the improvement of practice? What can their roles be?

Area - Related Planning Issues

1. Justification for a specific content issue.

2. Timeliness and criticality to proposer and region.

3. Concerns not reached (problem being solved and dilemma), number of

people affected ultimately, degree of impact on improvement of practice.

4. Possibility of replication or multiplying effects.
5. Availability of resources to solve the problem.
6. Involvement of underserved groups (while demonstrating that they will impact on success).
7. Potential for success (i.e., manageable size).
8. Funding different models of collaboratives.

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SELECTED REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A

SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

AND

PROJECT STAFF

INVITED PARTICIPANTS

COLLABORATIVE EFFORT SEMINAR I
December 10-11, 1979

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December 12-13, 1979

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Michael Kane

Mildred Thorne

Thel Kocher

COLLABORATIVE EFFORT PROJECT STAFF

Joseph Pascarelli (Seminar Facilitator)

Louis Rubin (Editor-in-Chief)

Virginia Thompson (Project Director)

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANTS' LETTER OF SEMINAR SPECIFICS

December 1979

Dear Seminar Participant:

Welcome to our Seminar on Interorganizational Arrangements for Collaborative Efforts. We very much appreciate your commitment and sense of willingness to work with us under very tight timelines. We do believe, however, that the level of influence and the potential impact of our meetings will overcome these inconveniences.

The information in this letter and in the enclosed packet provide basic information on the Seminar topics and on the context in which the Seminar is being held. The packet contains the written pieces which have been gathered and synthesized to date. Information generated during the remainder of this week will be available at the Seminar for your use. As I mentioned on the phone, this information may be viewed as a data base or springboard from which we will depart during the Seminar. We would like you to read it, react to it and be prepared to share with us at the Seminar a 15-20 minute response, along with your own perspective on the issue of interorganizational arrangements for collaborative efforts. The remainder of the Seminar will be devoted to formal and informal interaction sessions during which we will assist the Regional Program staff of NIE to analyze the information generated and to derive implications for future program efforts.

So that we understand the perspective and needs of the Regional Program, I have excerpted pertinent parts of the original Request for Proposal. In a sense, we can view it as a profile of the client -- the Regional Program staff of NIE.

ABOUT DISSEMINATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF PRACTICE (DIP) -- THE DIVISION OF NIE FOR WHOM THIS WORK IS BEING CONDUCTED

"This program area supports research aimed at strengthening the capacity of educational institutions and individual educators to acquire and apply knowledge to the practice of education: additionally this area supports improved systems for developing, disseminating and using knowledge at the national, regional and local level. The program gives primary attention to the needs of individuals and institutions who typically find it difficult to acquire and apply new knowledge because of lack of resources, access or experience.

The Program concentrates its resources on three main areas of activity: increasing the availability and usefulness of existing educational knowledge through the support of practical information resource systems; support of research which establishes a clearer understanding of the ways in which new knowledge can be assimilated into educational practice; and increasing the effectiveness of research and dissemination activity defined by regional needs and regional perspectives."

(Summary of NIE Reorganization Plan
June 1978)

ABOUT REGIONAL PROGRAM (RP) -- THE SPECIFIC SECTION WITHIN THE DISSEMINATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF PRACTICE DIVISION FOR WHOM THIS WORK IS BEING PERFORMED

"The Regional Program (RP) supports activities which contribute to DIP's mission of improving educational practice through knowledge derived from research and development. RP stimulates and supports mechanisms for improving educational practice and equity through regional approaches. RP contributes to NIE's other, more nationally oriented programs, by focusing on problems specific to a geographical area or to groups with common concerns. RP emphasizes inter-agency collaboration among decision makers in regions, states, local school districts, regional laboratories, R&D centers, colleges and universities and other educational organizations.

Through its various projects, the Regional Program supports the following goals:

- Meeting immediate needs of local practitioners;
- Facilitating person-to-person assistance in problem solving;
- Developing local capability for access to R&D resources;
- Fostering incentives for utilizing R&D products for improving practice and increasing equity; and
- Promoting collaborative relationships among diverse educational agencies

ABOUT THE REGIONAL GRANTS PROGRAM -- THE TARGET AREA OR CATEGORY FOR OUR STUDY OF INTERORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION

"The Regional Program is developing a plan that calls for a set of activities in FY 1981 designed to focus a variety of organizational resources and capacities on NIE's two goals of improving practice and

increasing equity in schools. A major component of the plan is a grants program that will solicit and fund school improvement projects meeting criteria to be defined in the next few months by the Regional Program. This RFP is one of a number of activities designed to provide information and thought that can be used by Regional Program staff as they work to develop the grants announcement.

The purpose of the proposed work will be:

1. To create a forum that can be used by Regional Program staff and others in the Institute to further clarify, conceptualize and develop operational criteria for the proposed grants program;

2. To provide a basis from research and from other literature for further consideration of Regional Program issues; and

3. To produce a compilation of information about existing interorganizational arrangements for improving educational practice, including an attempt to classify such collaborative efforts.

It is the intent that results of the work called for in this RFP will provide information to Regional Program staff who concurrently will be developing the RP grants program. The outcomes desired by the Regional Program should guide the contractor in selecting topics for the commissioned papers and in planning the seminars which are described in the Statement of Tasks. By the close of the seminars Regional Program staff, working concurrently but separate from this contract, will have clearly defined and reached agreement on the following elements of the proposed grants program:

- A clearly stated conceptualization
- A statement of intended outcomes
- Clear priorities for first-year consideration
- A statement of eligibility criteria; and
- A set of administrative funding categories

MORE ABOUT THE REGIONAL GRANTS PROGRAM -- THE AREA THAT WILL BE INFLUENCED MOST DIRECTLY BY THE OUTCOMES OF THE SEMINAR

A proposed Grants program to be announced in the Spring of 1980 intends to fund efforts that involve schools and other organizations working together, to disseminate and use knowledge gained from experience and research for the purpose of improving local school practice. The program will encourage schools and the organizations that provide them with knowledge resources and improvement assistance to work collaboratively. This collaboration may occur across geographic regions or on the basis of common interest and need.

A wide variety of such interorganizational arrangements for school improvement through knowledge utilization now exists and a seemingly infinite variety is possible. However, it is important for the Regional Program to have some system for classifying collaborative improvement efforts as a basis for funding categories, for development and monitoring purposes, and for documentation and evaluation of results.

Below is the present definition of the term "regional" as used by the Regional Program.

> RP has elected to use a very flexible and emerging definition of "regional" in planning its program. A region can be defined geographically as a center of transportation and communication interactions, as that area which surrounds a cultural or ethnic similarity, or a common heritage pattern. It could consist of a single state, a group of adjacent states or some other geographical configuration larger than a state but less than national. A variety of sub-state regions could also qualify. A region can also be defined by the common needs or interests of groups seeking assistance such as a configuration of urban schools, a network of urban school superintendents, a coalition of minority colleges and rural schools, etc. RP anticipates that regions will define themselves based upon the probelm or needs to be addressed. It is expected, then, that regions may sometimes overlap.
>
> (FY 1981 Regional Program Plan)

This, then, is the context or backdrop for our Seminars.

Your yellow looseleaf notebook contains a very rich collection of information that we have gathered and synthesized. It includes the following sections:

NWREL'S RESPONSE TO THE RFP. This represents our conceptual framework for the scope of work we at the Lab assumed. It served to help us pull together the major dimensions of the total effort and to treat it as a whole.

SEMINAR DESIGN. Our Seminars will be based on this design format. As you will note, it is a highly interactive design which will include three stages -- <u>defining</u>, <u>analyzing</u>, and <u>deriving implications.</u>

FOCUSED REVIEWS: COLLABORATION. Four reviews will treat the themes of <u>collaboration</u>, <u>working through intermediaries</u>, <u>the improvement of practice</u> and <u>equity</u>. Included in your section is the completed review on <u>collaboration</u>.

PRECIS OF EXISTING STUDIES. We've synthesized existing research documents having to do with dissemination and have gleaned from them some implications for our work on interorganizational collaboration.

SUMMARIES: PROJECTS INTERVIEWED. These are the results of our telephone interviews conducted with staff of projects across the country. They include descriptions of existing collaboratives, organizations of these structures and impact information.

ABSTRACTS OF COMMISSIONED PAPERS. The papers, written by a variety of educators, have been abstracted so that you will be able to identify key points, salient issues and recommendations.

As we mentioned in an earlier letter, the Purposes and Outcomes of the Seminars are as follows:

Purpose:

1. To study, and discuss the phenomenon of interorganizational collaboration as it contributes to improvement of practice and an increase in equity.

2. To develop an analytical knowledge base that will be used as a basis for a rationale, goals, criteria and design for a grants program of NIE's Regional Program.

Outcomes:

By the end of the Seminar Series, panel members and Regional Program staff will have:

1. Identified significant characteristics, issues and dimensions relating to the conceptual issues of -

- collaboration
- working through intermediaries

and four interorganizational categories -

- geographically defined regions
- program or product specific
- common interest groups
- special population groups

2. Explored and analyzed these issues.

3. Derived implications around these issues including implications for other interorganizational types.

4. Gathered a data base for the development of a grants program.

All this will serve as a base for our exploration and analysis. Please take the time to review it and accept the volume we've included as essential to our interaction at the Seminar.

SOME ADDITIONAL DETAILS

By now you've made your reservations at the Hotel Washington. It is located at 15th and Pennsylvania Avenues, a 15-minute cab ride from National Airport.

We will be hosting a social hour in our suite from 8:00-10:00 p.m., Sunday evening, December 9th. Please drop by so we will have the opportunity to meet you before the formal session. Please check at the desk for the suite number (under either Thompson or Pascarelli).

We are also sponsoring a Continental Breakfast hour at 8:00-9:00 a.m. Monday morning, December 10th. Check the billboard in the hotel lobby for room location.

We will be starting promptly at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning. That room assignment will also be posted.

Again, the time schedule for the Seminar is

Monday, December 10, 9:00 a.m. to late afternoon
Tuesday, December 11, 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

We plan to hold to these time commitments.

As a final note, we look forward to sharing with you the stimulation and enthusiasm we are experiencing as we "model" with you what this interorganizational collaboration issue is all about. We appreciate your involvement and commitment.

Sincerely,

Virginia Thompson

Joe Pascarelli

SOME ADDITIONAL DETAILS

By now you've made your reservations at the Hotel Washington. It is located at 15th and Pennsylvania Avenues, a 15-minute cab ride from National Airport.

We will be hosting a social hour in our suite from 8:00-10:00 p.m., Tuesday evening, December 11th. Please drop by so we will have the opportunity to meet you before the formal session. Please check at the desk for the suite number (under either Thompson or Pascarelli).

We are also sponsoring a Continental Breakfast hour at 8:00-9:00 a.m. Wednesday morning, December 12th. Check the billboard in the hotel lobby for room location.

We will be starting promptly at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday morning. That room assignment will also be posted.

Again, the time schedule for the Seminar is

Wednesday, December 12, 9:00 a.m. to late afternoon
Thursday, December 13, 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

We plan to hold to these time commitments.

As a final note, we look forward to sharing with you the stimulation and enthusiasm we are experiencing as we "model" with you what this interorganizational collaboration issue is all about. We appreciate your involvement and commitment.

Sincerely,

Virginia Thompson

Joe Pascarelli

APPENDIX C

LIST OF COMMISSIONED PAPERS AND AUTHORS

COMMISSIONED PAPERS AND AUTHORS

Alternative Organizational Arrangements, Educational Equity and School Improvement: Issues and Prospects for Educational Research and Development

Dr. John F. Heflin
Graduate Program in School Administration
Portland State University
Portland, Oregon

An R&D Prospectus for Educational Reform

Dr. Michael Fullan, Chair
Department of Sociology in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Back to Basics in Educational Dissemination

Dr. Henry M. Brickell
Policy Studies in Education
New York City, New York

Change Agentry and School Improvement: The Principal's Role

Dr. James M. Lipham
Professor of Educational Administration
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

Equity of Audiences in Educational Dissemination

Dr. Dean Chavers, President
Bacone College
Muskogee, Oklahoma

Federal Involvement in Education: A Principal's Role

Dr. Samuel L. Williams, Principal
Castle Hill Elementary School
Lauderhill, Florida

Federal Involvement in School Improvement

Dr. Anne Campbell
Commissioner of Education
State of Nebraska
Lincoln, Nebraska

Federal Involvement in School Improvement: A District Superintendent's Point of View

Dr. Ruth B. Love
Superintendent of Schools
Oakland, California

Improving Educational Practice Through Strengthening Ties Between Networks and Directed Development Efforts

Dr. Rex Hagans, Director
Division of Instructional Improvement
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Portland, Oregon

Promoting Interaction Among Producers and Users of Educational Knowledge

Dr. Terrence E. Deal and
Sharon F. Rallis
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Thoughts on Collaboratives

Dr. Matthew B. Miles
Center for Educational Policy Research
New York, New York

APPENDIX D

TRACKING WORKSHEETS

DISTRIBUTED TO

SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

DEFINING STAGES

INFORMATION	CONCERNS	QUESTIONS

ANALYZING STAGES

INFORMATION	CONCERNS	QUESTIONS

DERIVING IMPLICATIONS

SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION	PROBING AND PUSHING THE INFORMATION	IDENTIFYING THE IMPLICATIONS

APPENDIX E

ADDITIONAL DATA GENERATED BY SMALL GROUPS ATTENDING SEMINAR I

ADDITIONAL DATA GENERATED BY INDIVIDUALS ATTENDING SEMINAR I

GROUP A: CONCERNS/ISSUES

- Impact on individual agencies
  - Healthy
  - Excessive
- Need for a variety of modes
  - Informal/Formal
  - What mode appropriate for what?
  - What groups?
  - Time dimension - Life of the collaborative
- Need to develop a culture of collaboration at school and district levels
- Urban/rural - possible differences with respect to needs
- Purposes of the collaboration (parity; access to resources, etc.)
- Teacher/parent/child collaboratives - role level vs. organizational
- Voluntary collaboratives (possible exclusion of groups)
- School needs (agendas) may differ from those of central office
- Involuntary collaboration (may be perceived as an intervention)
- Role of intermediary (perhaps leadership, catalysts and incentives for collaboration)
- Constraints regarding collaboration

GROUP B: CONCERNS/ISSUES

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Personality
- Flexibility
- Reality
- Incentives (evaluation sensitivity to motivations)
- Collaboration - many are temporary
- Unintended outcomes documented
- Management process

GROUP C: CONCERNS/ISSUES

- Regionalism - multiple definition
- Collaboration
- Basic research - practitioner
- Dilemma - problem statement fact truth
- Sources of change and of collaboration literature

GROUP D: CONCERNS/ISSUES

- Information Overload of solutions to problems
- Improvement of practice premature; need systematic needs assessment
- Expanded technical assistance needed to design effective collaborative systems (through all labs, peers and other networks)
- Brokerage system is the key NIE role (providing for consultants, etc.)
- More participation of policy-makers in planning for collaboration
- Recognize true costs of collaboration (hard and soft dollars)
- Tap underutilized personnel for collaboration
- Define terms

GROUP E: CONCERNS/ISSUES

- School-based practitioners rely on people in like roles
- Build on existing network
- Need for obvious corporate and personal incentives
- Work with those universities now moving into the service area
- Need for continuous, outside stimulation (catalyst)
- Sources of energy
- Define equity-collaboration
- Identify criteria about definitions
- How to describe equitable improvement

ADDITIONAL GROUP CONCERNS:

- Identifying Incentives

  Self-interests of organizations (e.g., status)

  Political atmosphere (positive or negative)

  Costs

  Goal commonality

  Trust

  Compliance with the law

  Enhance information access and application

  Can do it with existing knowledge and resources...and accesses

- Identifying Constraints

  Political

  Organizational power loss (autonomy, independence mission control)

  Social, political, economic and cultural isolation

  Proximity to problem impact and conditions

  Different perceptions of the problem

- Incentives

  Need to advocate a given issue

  Working with the agenda of the collaborative's participants as a feasible avenue for meeting organizational needs and problems

- Contraints

  Misunderstanding of the appropriateness and limits of a collaborative

  Shift in the individual personalities/actors in the collaborative

  Time commitments and constraints

  Lack of power sharing and participation

  Inadequate organizational negotiating skills

  Unrealistic expectations of the collaborative

  Collaborative participants (organizations) that can't or are unlikely to carry through on their commitment to the collaborative task

  Buying into a collaborative for the wrong reasons

  Organizational constraints; instability; culture; inflexibility

APPENDIX F

ADDITIONAL DATA GENERATED BY INDIVIDUALS ATTENDING SEMINAR I

ADDITIONAL DATA GENERATED BY INDIVIDUALS ATTENDING SEMINAR I

Area - Success Models

- We need more normative statements. How do we know these things: Have we established what the success models are and now we wish to demonstrate them?
- There is a tendency (E. R. Stephens study) for ESAs to "do more" in states where CSSO is advocate for ESAs. ESA role is more clearly defined, etc.
- What are the implications for some kind of advocacy from power bases in the environment? For example, a "successful collaborative is more likely in a state where the state leadership encourages, supports, etc."
- What are the "environmental considerations" in which a collaborative operates?
- The discussion around this issue was important--funding should be to learn more about collaborative arrangements--more than to support/maintain collaborative endeavors (especially those of NIE). Perhaps if NIE programs were ineligible to receive the funding, the field would be favorable to the support of and need to learn from collaborative arrangements. This would not eliminate the possibility of NIE-sponsored programs being part of a collaborative arrangement--they probably should not receive the funding (e.g., SEAs, state capacity building project staff, Rxs, etc.).
- How do the "feds" facilitate collaboration with those who need it without becoming unwanted intruders upon local needs?
- When does a formal collaborative begin to inhibit the goals that were achieved better through informal collaboration? What do we need to know about the formal/informal dimension?
- Voluntary/involuntary collaboratives: can we devise means to manipulate variables (whatever they may be) to change the nature of a collaborative from involuntary to voluntary.
- Need for monitor to be able to pinpoint or identify ongoing hidden agendas that could jeopardize success of group.

Area - Issues and Concerns (Incentives - Constraints)

- What are the federal incentives that seem to facilitate collaboration?
- What are the federal constraints that seem to inhibit collaboration?
- What do we now know about these processes? What do we need to know?

- Should federal incentives be given to increase the collaborative "mentality" at the school level or higher up?

Incentives/Restraints:

- In one study (Texas Service Centers), 684 LEA superintendents scored 15 possible incentives from "no incentive" to "very strong incentive." Highest items had to do with communication and coordination in Texas school system. (Higher than "state and/or federal aid," for example). Biggest "deterrent" was "cost of substitutes, travel, etc."

- Improvement of the "state school system"

- Equity

- Does the "incentives" list include the concept that clients want to be in communication with "the system?" That the collaboration contribute to "coordination of the system."

- Should grant possibilities address the question of "equitable access?"

Incentives/Restraints:

- There is a need to build in technical assistance to clients with inadequate skills.

- Feds may have to work with groups with whom they have poor communication, limited experience, etc.

Area - Types of Collaboratives

- With respect to collaboratives--one sense of equity might be the comparative discrepancies between "what is" and "what is needed."

- Limited organizational definitions.

- Informal/formal. Clarify this--what is the difference between the two? (Implication: characteristics of each should be defined with time implications and constraints. Also with evolutionary considerations.)

- Consider collaboratives outside of formal education organizations, i.e., or e.g., health organizations; citizen groups--help or programs for the aging, remedial, returning persons to education after they experience in the work force retraining as needs change and new technology is developed. Unions; political organizations--regarding management of an urban area around such issues as redistricting, etc.; bilingual/bicultural organizations; legislatures, school boards.

Area - Intermediaries

- Leave definition, role and function of intermediaries open to allow for individuals to organizations to function as intermediaries.

- Funding targets: collaborative and/or intermediary. Can we be adequately flexible to fund both configurations?

- Intermediary: An intermediate service provider to cooperating clients.

  The issue of the collaboratives having the right to choose:

  1. Whether to work through an intermediary
  2. To choose the intermediary
  3. To create a new intermediary

- Intermediaries: the term should not be confused with "intermediate."

- Improvement of practice can be defined to mean better planning/ management among agencies which impacts each collaborator's ability to provide direct service, although it is not a direct service in itself.

- There is a need to clarify the distinction between the individual as an intermediary which has characteristics that are linker-like and organizations which serve as intermediate service providers. The characteristics, roles and functions are different.

- Consider the categories (in the literature) that define ESAs?

- Clarify the functions of the normative statements developed. They are better seen as questions to be studied assuming this is a research program.

- Material presented is all at the individual level; should be at the organizational level.

- There is evidence that clients of intermediaries (i.e., members of collaboratives who have ownership of the collaborative's goals) are more apt to carry out the goals of the collaborative than members who do not have ownership (Miles, 1978 - also Parker, 1977). Ergo, evidence of intent/ability of intermediaries to promote ownership among members of proposed collaboratives may be with criteria by which proposals should be judged.

Area - Impact

- The problem of competing for attention with other time-consuming activities in any organization.

- Quid pro quo - consider the need for personal gain, not just intellectual.

- There is a need for outside, continuous catalyst (stimulate interest).
- Consider infrastructure (staff) development.
- Identify entry points for NIE--job alike persons existing networks.

APPENDIX G

ADDITIONAL DATA GENERATED BY SMALL GROUPS ATTENDING SEMINAR II

ADDITIONAL DATA GENERATED BY SMALL GROUPS ATTENDING SEMINAR II

GROUP A: CONCERNS/ISSUES

- Collaboration must be a means to mobilize resources and competencies to attack a specific problem--not just collaborating for the purpose of a grant
- Target must be to improve service to clients
- NIE should be helping people concentrate on a clearly-defined problem looking for a solution
- Potential for success
- Recipients ability to handle knowledge base to solve the problem--preference to "using" rather than creating new knowledge
- Is criteria for accepting of proposal improving practice and increasing equity via success of collaboration?
- Collaboratives must give evidence of practical and theoretical knowledge regarding the school improvement and equity effort
- Choose criteria and adhere to them
- Stimulate responses to RFP that exemplify different approaches (different patterns of collaboration)
- Second generation capacity building--build on what is before as a more efficient method
- All involved must be program participants
- How important is the goal being attacked--importance placed by NIE on problem?
- Define region--do not serve regions within regions
- Horizontal and/or vertical collaboratives
- Target audiences should be on "controlling" advisory board
- What level of impact are we most interested in?
- Allow money to analyze/synthesize knowledge for purpose of improvement of art
- Consider what the grant is funding--demonstration vs. solving all problems
- Teacher training institutions

GROUP B: CONCERNS/ISSUES

- All parties to the project should be fully involved in the development and writing of the proposal. (Includes schools and teachers if they are part of the collaboration.)
- All parties should show evidence of agreement to participate
- NIE, as they develop the RFP, must look at the research on how healthy collaboratives have developed. Provide some models that would help some of these projects build on what NIE has learned from projects (e.g., RDU).
- The RFP should allow sufficient opportunity for collaboratives to meet the needs important to them
- How can NIE publicize the RFP so that groups--inside and outside of education--who do not normally apply for federal funds will know about it. What assistance can these groups get to help them compete against the groups with grant writing skills?
- NIE should try to allow more than the normal amount of time for response to the RFP to encourage proposals from "unusual groups" and to encourage teachers' participation
- It is of utmost importance that NIE really try to get unusual groups involved
- Language in the RFP should avoid words that might create negative feelings in some parts of the country

GROUP C: CONCERNS/ISSUES

- Collaboratives operate in complex political settings; funding agencies must be aware of and account for the political context
- While advocacy groups (such as voter registration) have little interest in seeking federal funding, they would and do participate in collaborative activities with agencies that receive federal funds
- What are the sources of information about how to build successful collaboration? Who should provide it? Where does one go for help?
- What differences in strategy are required in working in/with formal vs. informal collaboratives?
- Formal vs. informal collaboratives
- Legal ramifications
- Political sensitivity

GROUP D: CONCERNS/ISSUES

- Professional isolation of minorities (within and across ethnic groups collaboration)
- Information sharing (to increase equity)
- Substantive issues (for collaboratives to address)

  -- testing
  -- identification of gifted and talented minorities
  -- decline in enrollment--management of resources
  -- training of educational administrators
  -- citizen participation
  -- mainstreaming

- Process issue--sensitivity to appropriate intervention

GROUP E: CONCERNS/ISSUES

- Does NIE intend to document what makes collaboratives work or not?
- If so, how can this be kept unobtrusive?
- Is the objective to support collaboratives or to improve educational practice?
- Funding must be tied to the objectives (not maintenance)
- Some objectives are appropriate for NIE to fund; others are not. How is the decision made?
- Strict monitoring by external and internal advisory groups to adhere to objectives
- Evaluation (documentation) must be designed as an ongoing process
- Identification of incentives to be studied--the need for incentives varies inversely with the degree of felt need to participate in the collaborative
- Incentives intrinsic rather than extrinsic
- Keep grant agency as close to operating line as possible

GROUP F: CONCERNS/ISSUES

- What are the generic activities in which collaboratives engage?
- What might not get done through these shared resources? Documentation--coordination--publication--strengthening skills training--sharing with other collaboratives?

- Which of the above activities should NIE fund?

ADDITIONAL GROUP CONCERNS/ISSUES

- Characteristics of Intermediaries

  Unselfish in decision making

  Skilled at authentic involvement

  Tolerance for ambiguity

  Responsibility (responsive) to all clients

  Access to client power

  Access to resource provider (SEA, NIE, USOE, etc.)

  Balance: stability/risk taking

  Develop and sustain community identity

  Must contribute to equity

- Roles of Intermediaries

  Information provider--maintains strong ties to knowledge resource base

  Fiscal agent--legal responsibility

  Catalyst--provide stimulation

  Technical assistance--provide support services

  Span traditional boundaries

  Coordination--linking keeps participants aware of broader perspective

  Leadership--advocacy (equity, new programs, etc.); forecasting, anticipating

  Flags needs

- Functions of Intermediaries

  If collaboration means sharing among clients:

  contribution to -- planning
  (1 or more) policy formation
  decision processes
  program configuration
  support

  benefitting from -- services
  (1 or more) better use of resources
  sense of community--reduced isolation
  access to resources--information, R&D status

  Then an intermediary is: an intermediate service provider to cooperating clients

When does one use an intermediary?

When should organizations be left to their own devices?

What is the authority for assertions about characteristics of intermediaries? (Should they be framed as questions?)

- Types of Collaboratives

  Dimensions:

  purpose
  length or duration
  formal/informal
  stimulated by external supports or by internal needs

  Geographic scope

  Existing vs. newly established

  Common interest vs. regional

  Single purpose (National Consortium on Testing) vs. multi-purpose (School Study Council)

  Cooperation vs. control

  Extent to which a collaborative interrelates to other groups

  Need for clarification of informal/formal collaboratives

APPENDIX H

ADDITIONAL DATA GENERATED BY INDIVIDUALS ATTENDING SEMINAR II

ADDITIONAL DATA GENERATED BY INDIVIDUALS ATTENDING SEMINAR II

Area - Definition of Collaboration

- Look at projects interviewed in Seminar booklet. Consider the Alabama Environmental Quality Association: non-self-serving--focused on solving problems (garbage collection, solid waste disposal, yellow fever mosquito), moved from looser structure to more formalized broker of services of experts.
- Is geographic distribution ever an appropriate criteria?
- Are we concerned with the so-called "20 urban superintendents" in collaborative design?
- What do you mean by the "art" of collaboration (as different from the science? or what?)
- How can we determine if a collaborative is created just to get a grant?
- Might a separately funded external evaluation be desirable for formative or summative evaluation, or both?
- How does NIE avoid using funding (by design or unintentionally) guidelines in ways that create collaboratives separate from true needs/purposes--also avoid manipulating existing collaboratives?
- Collaboration should mobilize resources and competencies. Target is to improve service. Clearly define problem at the outset. Groups should know what has been done before. Criteria for judging proposals should be well defined and should not be changed. Proposals should build on previous knowledge.
- Collaboration must be a means to mobilize resources and competencies to attack a specific problem.
- Collaboration should improve service to a target group.
- Collaborative projects should be based on a clearly defined problem looking for a solution, rather than vice versa.
- The potential for success should be considered.
- RFP-DIP should use the existing knowledge base.
- Criteria must be selected and adhered to.
- We must build on what has already been effective.
- All involved in a collaborative project must be equal participants.

- Is NIE looking for collaboratives that will develop and then have permanance, or is NIE interested in supporting groups that will dissipate after funding?

Area - Functions of Collaboratives

- Funding existing collaboratives--might stifle the exploration of some very real problems. Existing collaboratives may exist around already carved-out areas; they might just modify their area rather than coming up with creative approaches.
- Is the collaborative to be a temporary one?
- Is the collaborative to exist only with NIE funding?
- Will you be looking to see if other monies are being meshed with NIE funds?
- Should NIE be developing new collaboratives at all, or working through those that exist? NIE should work through extant collaboratives when there are similar goals--NIE should not develop (sponsor or fund) collaboratives that are in competition with ongoing collaborative efforts.
- How do we (NIE) learn when it is appropriate to intervene to make collaboratives more successful?
- Do you see collaboratives as a voluntary effort or something to be approved/structured by NIE?
- Should collaboratives deal only with nationally recognized issues as identified?
- Professional isolation is a good issue. Is information sharing going to solve the problem of equity or will actual fudning to the isolated groups be the answer?
- Is forced collaboration of groups or professionals or individuals who don't want to collaborate a good thing?
- Specifying areas of collaboration in the RFP will restrict the range of responding agencies and more importantly, will increase the chances of opportunistic proposals--people who apply simply because the money is there.
- Are there differences in the issues to be studied for voluntary and mandated collaboratives?
- A collaborative often serves needs beyond itself--how does this relate to the self-interest element?
- How can NIE facilitate collaboration? Collaboration without running into the pitfalls of formalization?

- An intermediary can become self-serving. How can NIE prevent this from happening?

- NIE must learn from the research it funds. Insure professionals becoming better at meeting the needs of kids--not at becoming better collaborators.

- Beware of using organizations to co-opt other organizations; use established networks rather than form new ones.

- How does NIE work at the grass roots level rather than through intermediaries?

- Does a collaborative exist with professional (teacher) groups within a state? If so, what are the results? (I.e., New York state.)

- Are teachers to be involved in the development of the project? The writing of the proposal? What is their role?

- Consider funding other than education agencies? What residual can be expected? What improvements would be made in the education system?

- RFP language needs to be carefully screened for "red flags."

- Who should be involved in the writing of RFPs?

- All members of a co-op should participate in decision making concerning co-op objectives.

- Groups need technical assistance in preparing proposals. Allow as much time as possible between RFP and due date. Time: RFP to deadline. Allow <u>at least</u> 6 weeks. Look at research. Encourage all different kinds of groups.

<u>Area - Functional Characteristics of Collaboratives</u>

- Can the issues and concerns collaboratives deal with and the processes the collaboratives use be delineated to allow the kind of monitoring desired?

- What is the role of the project officer--monitor? Technical assistor?

- What are incentives for disparate organizations and individuals to share their scarce resources, to take risks, to engage?

- <u>Ends and means</u>:

  Overarching ends of both NIE and field--improvement of practice
  increase equity in education

NIE interim end: strengthening the means by which the above end can be achieved by...

NIE means: understanding better how collaborative arrangements can be: a) used effectively for that purpose, and b) how to strengthen them.

Field ends: achieve the overarching objectives directly, aided by...

Field means: use of collaboratives to bring resources together for improving existing practice and equity.

- Are the collaboratives supposed to emphasize one type or the other? Any preference? Who judges, with what criteria, whether a group is using craft, experience-based, research-based, or no knowledge in what it does?

- What incentives are there for a collaborative to permit itself to be documented/evaluated/studied?

- Possible incentives for collaborating:

  1. Recognition?
  2. Desire to share what it has learned?
  3. To get feedback, evaluation of themselves by outsides, so they can self-improve.
  4. Possibility to get immediately or subsequent to the study some supplemental operational support for key functions? (Not automatic and not currently mentioned in program documents. Is this level of incentive required to get collaborative to enter into this grants competition?)

- What research is it that we are helping to get into practice? Has anyone identified it? Is it the research on collaboratives? Or research on how kids can learn better, etc.?

- Emphasize the importance of relating the goals and objectives of the collaborative to what it actually does.

- What problems have collaboratives identified?

- If NIE monitors a collaborative project, whose objectives are monitored--NIE's or the project's?

- What if the goals of the collaboratives shift in the process of dealing with reality? What provisions can be made?

- How can NIE work within the political contexts without becoming subservient to political forces to the extent that the professional thrust is impaired?

- Should NIE fund collaboratives or agencies which have identified

several problems which need solution and who see the possibility of developing thrusts through collaboratives?

- The definition of an informal collaborative may be different from a voluntary collaborative or problem-centered collaborative. What implications result?

- Should not the issue or questions precede the establishment of any collaborative? These then should suggest the structure of the cooperative organization.

- Where does help for forming collaboratives exist?

  1. National School Development Council Offices
  2. Interpretive study of R&D relative to educational cooperatives (ED 059-544)
  3. In the minds (craft knowledge) of persons currently running successful collaboratives
  4. At ARC (The RESA Program)
  5. Dissertations on regional agencies--study councils, etc.
  6. "Basic Planning and Evaluation Model for Cooperation in Providing Regional Education Services," now slightly outdated, ED 043-827

- How does NIE make sure that it is sensitive to political context? How can they "know" when they are not?

- How do you define formal/informal collaborative if it is to be objective- goal-oriented?

- It is possible in the developmental life of a collaborative that there will be a mix of formal and informal aspects. It would be unfortunate if the dichotomy is drawn too sharply.

- Isn't it possible for NIE to fund collaboration assistance as well as collaboratives themselves?

- Is the formal vs. informal dimension the same or different from natural vs. mandated dimension? Do we have a matrix for research?